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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Communications Radio-TV Division Washington, DC 20250-1340 (202)720-4330

Letter No. 2631

October 8, 1993

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM -- USDA has added one million acres of highly erodible and environmentally sensitive cropland to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), 36 million acres are now enrolled. "The CRP continues to provide substantial reduction in government outlays for commodity programs while providing major environmental benefits," says Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. Permanent cover planted on CRP land has reduced soil erosion by 700 million tons annually, providing a noticeable improvement in water quality. Nearly 2 billion trees have been planted on 2 million CRP acres. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

THE POWER LUNCH -- "Lunchpower" is the name of a Minnesota project designed to help schools serve lunches that are lower in fat and sodium. The program uses all foods, including student favorites which may be higher in fat or sodium, but they are planned around the dietary guidelines. Over a one-month period the lunches average reduced levels of fat and sodium. The program also uses science, math, writing and other subjects to teach children about food and nutrition. A manual has been prepared to guide food service workers in adopting the "Lunchpower" program for their school. **Contact: Susan Rudberg (612) 296-8977.**

BIG BUCKS -- Last year Americans spent \$463 billion in food expenditures, \$280 billion in food stores and another \$183 billion in food service establishments. In the next 20 years expenditures for food away from home are expected to grow 24 percent, compared to food-at-home purchases which are estimated to grow only 7 percent. Annual growth in per capita income will fuel the eating out expenditures. Benefitting the most will be fruit, up 10 percent, and sugars, up 6 percent. While the 31 percent growth in food spending is impressive, it represents a slowing trend. Food expenditures, adjusted for inflation, grew 52 percent between 1970 and 1990. **Contact: Noel Blisard (202) 219-0860.**

SPENDING IT TO MAKE IT -- U.S. farm producers spent \$145 billion last year to produce their products, down one percent from 1991 totals. The decline was mostly due to lower interest rates and fewer equipment purchases. Largest expenditures were for feed, 16 percent of total production expenses. The average expenditures per U.S. farm last year were \$69,498. The farm production region contributing the most to production expenditures was the Corn Belt, at \$31 billion, followed by the Pacific Region (\$21 billion), Northern Plains (\$17 billion), Lake States (\$16 billion), and the Southern Plains (\$13 billion). **Contact: Doug Kleweno (202) 720-4214.**

FEED GRAINS ARP -- The 1994 feed grains acreage reduction program will be 5 percent for corn, and 0 percent for grain sorghum, barley and oats. The 1994-crop acreage reduction percentages are down from 1993 levels of 10 percent for corn and 5 percent for grain sorghum. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

THE RIGHT PRICE -- A recently completed study by USDA's Economic Research Service shows that in wheat exports, price, not dockage content, was the most important criterion of the purchasing decision by many foreign buyers. Most importing countries regard characteristics such as protein quality and quantity, test weight, and moisture content to be more important than physical cleanliness. The study indicates that tighter cleanliness levels would produce a net economic loss, but that the industry might benefit from cleaning a sufficient quantity of wheat to meet demands in cleanliness-conscious markets. **Contact: Mack Leath (202) 219-0880.**

PLANTING SOYBEANS EARLY -- A new soybean variety, Vernal, lets farmers plant earlier without worrying about shorter days. Soybeans grow and mature in response to the amount of daylight received. Ideally, they should receive 14 1/2 hours of daylight when the plants emerge. Vernal's delayed flowering characteristic permits good growth despite shorter days. In field tests conducted by researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, a mid-May planting and mid-October harvest yielded 45 bushels an acre. When planting was moved to mid-April the beans matured in late September and averaged 55 bushels per acre. **Contact: Edgar Hartwig (601) 686-2311.**

KNOWING YOUR NEIGHBOR -- USDA's Economic Research Service has produced a bulletin about the agricultural sectors of the former USSR. "Agricultural Statistics of the Former USSR Republics and the Baltic States," consists of 259 tables of agricultural numbers for each of the 15 republics as well as the aggregate former USSR. The statistics cover such subjects as land use, farm structure, population and labor force, inventories, farm machinery, availability of fertilizers, grain area and yields, livestock inventories, production of selected crops, and per capita annual consumption of food products. Its the first such publication to reflect the recent breakup of the former Soviet Union. **Contact: Jaclyn Shend (202) 219-0620.**

REPORT TIMING STUDY -- USDA is conducting a study to determine if the release time should be changed for regularly scheduled reports that are market sensitive. Public comment is being sought on whether the current release time best serves the interests of U.S. agriculture and the food and fiber system. Alternative release times being examined are 8:30 a.m. ET, 12:00 noon ET, and 3:00 p.m. ET. Commodity markets have changed, as well as the speed of communication, since USDA established the 3:00 p.m. time for market sensitive reports. Written comments should be addressed to: Economics Agencies Freedom of Information Officer, USDA/EMS, Room 4310 South Building, 14th & Independence Ave. Southwest, Washington, D.C. 20250. Deadline is November 1. **Contact: Raymond Bridge (202) 720-5447.**

FARM NUMBERS FORECAST -- The number of U.S. farms will likely decline by only 15,000 per year in the next decade compared with the rate of over 100,000 annually a few decades ago. States west of the Mississippi River will experience little change in farm numbers. Southern and Northeastern states will lose farms the fastest, 1 to 2 percent a year, because the regions have the greatest imbalance between older and younger farmers. Farm consolidation will continue at a moderate rate, and decline less than one percent a year, in the Corn Belt and Lake States regions. The coming decade will see a slow evolution toward fewer, larger commercial farms with closer ties to downstream agribusinesses, and a growing number of small, part-time and speciality farms. **Contact: Frederick Gale (202) 219-0525.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1896 -- On this edition, **Gary Crawford** reports on a world chock full of bugs. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1378 -- Insect zoo; good and bad weed; reviving the heartland; fall bulb planting; reducing pesticide residue on foods. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1888 -- USDA News Highlights; 1994 ARP for feed grains; monitization; weed control for edible beans; integrated pest management. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1641 -- Highway legume; sustainable forage; altered virus; resistant ticks; tick I.D. probe. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, October 19, crop & weather update; Wednesday, October 20, ag outlook, trade update; Thursday, October 21, rice outlook, catfish processing; Friday, October 22, oil crops outlook, cattle on feed, livestock update; Monday, October 25, dairy outlook. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on the "Choice" farm; **Pat O'Leary** reports on biodiversity, and on USDA's plant explorers; **Will Pemble** on the National Seed Storage Laboratory.

ACTUALITIES -- As part of this year's World Food Day ceremony, Secretary of Agriculture **Mike Espy** explains why World Food Day is important and what USDA is doing to fight hunger; USDA meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather and crops; USDA economist **Joel Greene** on U.S. agricultural trade.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on coaxing genes; **Pat O'Leary** reports on the origins of the Jack-O-Lantern.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

CAN YOU IMAGINE...a combine stuck in Montana mud, says **Brent Stanghelle** (KMON, Great Falls), the State averages only 10" of rain a year. This year was a little different. Brent says the mud has made getting in the wheat a real problem. Brent is keeping a close watch on the Canadian wheat trade issue for his listeners, who include many Canadians.

FALL FISHING...has been tough, says **Louis Rosandick** (WFHR, Wisconsin Rapids, WI). The cool, wet weather has sent the fish to deep water. He's had success running his line at 30' deep. Louis says dairy producers have ample hay for this winter, but little corn. The corn crop did not mature. Harvesting it for silage is a problem because the fields are saturated with water.

GRAIN HARVEST...is very late, and we're expecting snow, says **Lyle Romine** (American Ag Network, Fargo, ND). One-third of the crop remains in the field. Lyle reports average yields for beets, and a substantial drop from normal soybean yields. Only 50% of average is expected.

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Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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THE SPORT...of hand corn picking was recognized at the 13th annual Illinois Corn Husking contest conducted in early October at Monmouth, IL. **Thomas Peterson** (WRAM/WMOI, Monmouth) covered the events and the 75 contestants. Sixteen qualified for the national finals, October 16-17, in Upper Sandusky, OH. Tom says the station's recent Farmers Appreciation Breakfast had the biggest turnout ever, and was a real success.

THIRD TIME -- is the charm for cotton producers served by **Richard Shields** (KKYN, Plainview, TX). In 1991 an early freeze stole the crop. Last year it got rained out. Rich says this year cotton in his region looks the best since 1981. He says producers really needed this one.

THE 0-92 PROGRAM...is getting a lot of participation in the area served by **Dennis Morrice** (KCID, Spencer, IA). The station has also created programming for city residents saying why farmers are plowing crops under. Dennis says low interest bank loans are stimulating equipment purchases.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division